American Labor Movement". Formally, it is a bid to rewin for organized labor the support from the liberal-intellectual, academic, student and racial minority communites. It proposes that organized labor again become the champion of social reforms benefitting all of society. The list of reforms is excellent. It would push labor unions to a forefront position in the struggle for racial equality, civil liberties, educational reform, aid to elderly citizens and the conservation of natural resources. It is against poverty and, although staunchly anti-communist, favors

> building bridges of international understanding leading toward a reduction of armaments and the building of a just and enduring peace in which people with diverse economic and social systems might live peacefully.

Reuther wants to lead and discipline the new labor militancy but he does not want to set forces into motion that would shake the foundation of present labor-management relationships. Instead, he intends to press the demand for guaranteed annual salaries and a share in profits for auto workers. A serious push in this direction would not be hailed by employers, but it has a "lesser evil" attractiveness to management. If obtained it could have a conservatizing effect on the work force and a regularizing effect on the flow of daily production which might otherwise become increasingly erratic.

Walter Reuther does have options; in the main, they have narrowed down to three: (1) He can pursue his present new program calling for an enlightened return to the unionism of the 1930's, including a continuation of his very positive aid to the organizing programs of farm workers. (2) He can use his current power to police the ranks' new revolt and its demands for basic change in the concepts and attitudes held by official union leaders. (3) Or, to the worthy sections of his new program related to social reforms he can add the following: a policy for a democratic union structure that extends into the work places, giving the ranks a voice and role in daily union operation and decision making; [a policy that officially gives top priority to the major demand to "humanize working conditions]; an independent political policy that would end official labor's subservience to existing political parties.

Only the third option affords Reuther the opportunity to differentiate himself basically from George Meany. Without it the rank and file cannot be won to a program of social reforms. History has shown that no segment of the American community has ever conducted a major struggle for social reform without the prospect of direct and major rewards for itself, and that leaders who refuse to recognize this duality isolate themselves.

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U. S. A. - The Labor Revolt

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U.S.A.: The Labor Revolt

The rank and file union revolts that have been developing in the industrial workplaces since the early 1950's are now plainly visible. Like many of their compatriots, American workers are faced with paces, methods and conditions of work that are increasingly intolerable. Their union leaders are not sensitive to these conditions. In thousands of industrial establishments across the nation, workers have developed informal underground unions. The basic units of organization are groups composed of several workers each of whose members work in the same plant-area and are thus able to communicate with one another and form a social entity. Led by natural on-the-job leaders, they conduct daily guerrilla skirmishes with their employers and often against their official union representatives as well. These groups are the power base for the insurgencies from below that in the last three years have ended or threatened official careers of long standing.

• The second and concluding portion of this article will appear in the next issue of *ISJ*. It will examine the causes and future of the revolts together with an analysis of both the increase in white collar, professional, service worker and civil servant unionisms in the United States, and the Reuther-Meany split in the AFL-CIO.

During the same period, farm laborers, teachers, professionals, white collar, service and civil service workers, who were not reached by labor's revolt of the 1930's, have demonstrated an adamant desire to organize themselves into unions. For the first time in over three decades the United States faces a period in which the struggles of the unionized section of the population will have a direct and visible effect on the future of the entire population. Because the press coverage of the revolts has been superficial and because they have been ignored by the liberal and a majority of radical publications, it is necessary that the major revolts be examined in some detail.

Widespread Revolt Begins in Auto

The General Motors Corporation employs as many workers as all other auto manufacturers combined. In 1955, United Automobile Workers' president, Walter Reuther, signed a contract with GM which did not check the speedup or speed the settlement of local shop grievances. Over 70% of GM workers went on strike immediately after Reuther announced the terms of his agreement. A larger percentage 'wildcatted' after the signing of the 1958 contract because Reuther had again refused to do anything to combat the speedup. For the same reason, the auto workers walked off their jobs again in 1961. The strike closed every GM and a number of large Ford plants.

The UAW ranks' ability to conduct a nation-wide wildcat strike is made possible by a democratic practice that has been maintained by GM workers since the thirties. Every GM local sends elected delegates to Detroit to sit in council during national contract negotiations. They instruct their negotiators and confer with them as the bargaining progresses. Ideally the council and negotiators arrive at an agreement on the package that the latter have been able to obtain from the employer and both the rank and file delegates and leaders recommend ratification by the ranks at the local union level. In 1961, when the council unanimously recommended rejection and strike, Reuther notified the press that the strike was official, that he was leading it and that it would continue until all grievances concerning working conditions had been settled in separate local supplemental agreements rather than in the national contract. He thus maintained control. The ranks were outmaneuvered and angered.

Just prior to the negotiation of the 1964 contract a development took place in the UAW that is unique in American labor history. Several large Detroit locals initiated a bumper sticker campaign. In all cities across the country where UAW plants are located the bumpers of auto workers' cars pushed the slogan: "Humanize Working Conditions".

Lacking the support of their official leaders, they were attempting to inform the public of the nature of the struggle they were about to conduct and that its primary goal would be to improve the condition of factory life rather than their wages.

Their attempt to bypass Reuther failed. Contrary to established practice he opened negotiations with Chrysler, the smallest of the Big Three auto makers. He imposed the pattern of this contract on the Ford workers and announced that the Chrysler-Ford agreements would be the pattern for the GM contract. The dialogue of the GM workers with their president was brief. They struck every GM plant for five weeks and were joined by thousands of Ford workers. They returned to work under a national contract no better than those signed with Ford and Chrysler. Their strike won the settlement of a backlog of local grievances; created pride in the knowledge that it was primarily and publicly directed against Reuther's maneuver, and made possible the further development of rank and file leaders. They demonstrated that they would not give ground in their efforts to make their national contract a weapon against the speedup and to rid themselves of a grievance procedure that allows the settlement of individual grievances to take up to two years.

Aware that the ranks would be continuing their fight and seeking revenge at the UAW's September 1966 convention in Long Beach, California, Reuther sought issues that could be used to divert their wrath. In early 1965 the ballot count in the election between incumbent International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE) President James B. Carey and his challenger Paul Jennings was in doubt. Reuther issued a statement to the press announcing his offer to merge the IUE with the UAW. The merger might have salvaged Carey's reputation and employment in the labor movement. It could also have been used as a major agenda item necessitating extended discussion at the UAW convention, but Carey rigidly turned down the offer claiming that he had learned of Reuther's offer only hours before it was made public.

The Long Beach UAW convention in May of last year was the first labor convention experience for over 60% of the delegates. Many of the faces that had become familiar to Reuther during previous conventions were absent. None of the delegates got a chance to discuss what was the main issue of the ranks who elected them — the demands they want to make and win in the negotiations for the 1967 contract; that point on the agenda was postponed to a special conference in April 1967. Reuther won more than a breathing spell at Long Beach. In the months preceding the convention the rebellion in the UAW's 250,000 man Skilled Trades Department had reached crisis proportions. Their wages had fallen behind craft union members doing comparable work in other industries. They threatened to disaffiliate and join the rival International

Society of Skilled Trades (independent). The convention amended the UAW constitution to give the Skilled Trades Department, containing less than 20% of the UAW's members, veto power over all national contracts. It is likely that they will get a substantial wage increase in the 1967 contract. They do not work under the same conditions as the semi-skilled who buck the assembly lines and who are the majority and now second class citizenry of the UAW. Reuther has obtained an aristocratic power base and laid the foundation for another and more violent rupture in the UAW.

For more than a decade it has been absolutely clear that the UAW ranks demand top priority be given to the fight to improve working conditions. Their efforts to make Reuther lead this fight have been herculean. At this late date it is almost paradoxical that he remains rigid in his refusal to make that fight. And so he must try to go into the April conference equipped with a diversionary tactic of gigantic proportions — based on more than a transparent maneuver that will only further enrage his ranks. His recent resignation as first vice president of the AFL-CIO and his open split with that body's president, George Meany, has among other things, armed him with such a diversion. The question of total withdrawal from the AFL-CIO is the first point on the agenda of the April conference which is now scheduled to last only three days.

Leaflets circulated by UAW members in Detroit auto plants last January and prior to the split, ridiculed Reuther's inability to stand up to Meany. They were picked up by the national press and significantly hurt Reuther's prestige. Evidence mounts to indicate that Reuther was finally driven to sever his distasteful relationship with Meany for two principal reason: 1) the demands of the UAW's revolt and internal struggle, 2) the widespread revolts throughout the labor movement, particularly in the unions that form Reuther's domain in the AFL-CIO (Industrial Union Department). The latter may include a third principal factor. The revolts are numerous enough to have given Reuther the vision that the revolts in the 1930's gave to John L. Lewis — the formation of a powerful new labor confederation through the organizational centralization of the unions that are in rebellion — a confederation that could now include white collar, professional, service and farm workers.

The wildcat strike of UAW-GM Local 527 in Mansfield, Ohio, in February, revealed the depth of the liberal stance Reuther has taken in his fight with Meany. The total walkout at Mansfield occurred because two workers were fired for refusing to make dies and tools ready for shipment to another plant in Pontiac, Michigan. GM has long followed a policy of transferring work out of plants where workers have established better working conditions or are conducting a struggle to improve them, to other plants with less militant work forces. The Mansfield workers

had long observed this practice in silence. To be forced to participate in the transferral and their own defeat was the final indignity.

Mansfield is a key GM parts feeder plant and their strike idled 133,000 men in over 20 shops. Instead of utilizing this power to win his men's demands, Reuther declared the strike illegal. Moreover, he threatened to put the local into trusteeship and suspend local democracy. In an all day session on February 22, his leadership pressured Local 727 leaders into asking their men to return to work without winning a solution of their grievances. The local leaders were told that the strike was poorly timed because it came on the eve of the UAW's big push for annual salaries and profit sharing in 1967 bargaining. These two demands are to be given preference over all others. It is probable that the Mansfield strike has prematurely revealed the argument that Reuther will use in the April Conference against rank and file demands that the big push be to eliminate the speedup and inoperable grievance machinery.

The above probability is reinforced by the February 8, UAW Administrative Letter issued to elaborate Reuther's position on his split with Meany. It contains a long and detailed "Outline of UAW Program For The American Labor Movement". Under its section on collective bargaining it stresses the "development of a sound economic wage policy". No mention or hint is made of the need to improve working conditions which to this moment is the cause of the major crisis for Reuther's leadership.

Under "Aims and Purposes of a Democratic Labor Movement" the February 8 letter stresses collective bargaining and "appropriate progressive legislation" as the methods to be used to advance the interests of union members and their families. But Reuther's current policies insure that direct action, including wildcat strike and minor acts of sabotage in the plants, will daily continue to interrupt production. His program's concessions to the revolt can only encourage the fight against conservative union leadership and does not include goals that will enable him to lead and contain it. His failure to champion an improvement of working conditions will create a consequent dimming of enthusiasm and support for Reuther's new program for American labor, both within the UAW ranks and the ranks of unions whose support he hopes to win. His actions will tend also to undercut the possibility of success for the many good policies the program contains.

Longshoremen and Steelworkers

In 1964 the ranks of the International Longshoremen's Association (East and Gulf Coasts) conducted a strike-revolt against both their employers and union officials that was identical to and almost

simultaneous with that accomplished by the UAW rank and file. The stevedoring companies and ILA officials had negotiated what appeared to be an excellent contract. It contained, by past standards, a significant wage increase. It guaranteed every union member a minimum of 1,600 hours of work per year and minor economic fringe benefits. The dockers struck immediately upon the announcement of the terms. Their president, Thomas W. Gleason, hurriedly toured all locals at the request of George Meany on a mission called "Operation Fact". Gleason claimed his ranks wildcatted because they didn't understand the contract. They understood only too well. In return for the recommended settlement the number of men in each work gang was to be cut from 20 to 17. The employers originally demanded a gang size reduction to 14 men, a size more nearly in line with manning scales negotiated by International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union President Harry Bridges for west coast longshoremen. The ILA ranks did not give in to this or the many other undercutting pressures. President Johnson declared a national emergency and invoked the 80 day "cooling off" period under the provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act.

Wildcat strikes resumed on December 21, one day after the "cooling off" period ended and continued through January. All ports were on strike at the same time for over 18 days, and longer in southern and Gulf ports where separate and inferior contracts were offered. Longshoremen in New York and northern east coast ports returned to work having lost on the main issue of gang size, but their defeat in this battle was not accompanied by a deep demoralization. Their union has long been unofficially divided into separately led baronies. For the first time in the history of the ILA the entire membership initiated and conducted an all-union strike.

The United Steelworkers' Union revolt deserves special attention because it demonstrates how long it takes in some instances for a revolt to develop. In 1946 the steelworkers conducted a 26-day strike; in 1949, 45 days of strike; in 1952, 59 days; in 1956, 36 days. All of these strikes were conducted with only reluctant or forced support from the international leadership.

In 1957, an obscure rank-and-file leader named Ronald Rarick ran against USW President David MacDonald. Rarick, a conservative who has since become a reactionary, based his entire program on opposition to a dues increase and increase in the salaries of officials. As the campaign for the presidency developed, the rank-and-file could see that Rarick was not a militant unionist. Militants couldn't vote for Rarick with enthusiasm. His candidacy was used in the main to record opposition to MacDonald. He beat MacDonald in the Pennsylvania region by a slight margin, but lost nationally. The vote ran: 223,000 for Rarick, 404,000 for

MacDonal. I.W. Abel, running for Secretary-Treasure, got 420,000 and his opposition got 181,000. In effect, Rarick disappeared after the election, but the vote he received alarmed the leaders of the large unions.

Four years later, MacDonald ran unopposed and received only 221,000 votes. It was obvious that MacDonald had been able to win a large vote against Rarick because he was able to utilize the treasury and resources of the International. To beat MacDonald a candidate had to be recruited from inside the International who also had access to its facilities.

As early as the Special Steelworkers Conference of 1952, the regional and local union leaders of the USW had warned MacDonald that he would have to do something about the deterioration of working conditions in the plants. They further warned that the resulting rank-and-file anger was threatening their position and they might have no other alternative than to transmit this pressure to him.

Twelve years later many of these same secondary and tertiary leaders realized that they could not survive under MacDonald's leadership. They picked I.W. Abel, a man who had not worked in a mill for 25 years, to challenge MacDonald. After a long dispute over the ballot count, Abel was declared the winner. Under his leadership a significant democratization of the negotiation process has begun. Delegates to the 1966 USW convention terminated the union's participation in the joint employer-union Human Relations Committee whose function was to study plant working conditions and to determine how they could be changed in order to cut the costs of production and speed the automation process. The union's 165 man Wage Policy Committee which had the power to ratify contracts was also completely stripped of its power. A new and somewhat liberalized method for allowing the ranks a voice in negotiations was instituted. The policy of last minute "shotgun" bargaining a few days prior to contract expiration was substituted for MacDonald's practice of beginning negotiations a year in advance of deadline.

Electrical Workers and their Secondary Leaders Unite

James B. Carey, President of the International Union of Electrical Workers was removed from office in a struggle similar to that which deposed David MacDonald. By 1953, he had been out of contact with his membership for many years. He had failed to lead them in a fight for improved working conditions against the General Electric and Westinghouse corporations. He had been less successful than Reuther or even MacDonald in obtaining wage increases to ease his ranks' anger. However, he felt the pressure of coming rebellion and sought to oppose rather than appease

it. He proposed a constitutional change for his union that would have had the employers collect union dues and send them directly to the union's Washington, D.C., headquarters, which would in turn dispense to the locals their stipulated share.

The secondary leaders recognized the danger to themselves and in 1964, with the backing of the ranks, organized an opposition to Carey. In Paul Jennings of the Sperry local in New York they found a candidate with a good union reputation. Jennings beat Carey, but a majority of the ballot counters were Carey supporters and they declared Carey the winner. Jennings forces challenged the count and Carey supporters readied a second set of ballots to show the challengers. They would have given Carey the victory. Because of the ease with which Carey made enemies, even among men like George Meany, the supporters of Jennings were able to obtain aid in a world unfamiliar to the union's ranks. The U.S. Department of Labour impounded the original ballots before a ballot switch could be made.

The struggle for rank and file autonomy in the IUE did not end with Jennings' 1964 part-coup victory. In a very short time Jennings did more to improve wages than his predecessor, but he too neglected the fight for working conditions. Under his leadership the IUE engineered a united effort of eleven unions in the 1966 negotiations and subsequent strike against GE. A showdown was long overdue. GE had a 1965 volume of $6.2 billions, up one billion over 1964. It spent $330 million for capital expansion and still netted $355 million after taxes. Profits after taxes for the 1960-1965 period were up 52%. They had grown accustomed to docile union negotiators. The IUE-led united front broke GE's Boulwarist approach to bargaining, i.e., GE's practice of making their first settlement offer their last settlement offer under Board President Boulwaris' chairmanship. It also broke President Johnson's 3.2% wage guideline and obtained a 5% wage increase. However, after the contract was signed, major locals of all unions in the front, including thousands of workers of the IUE, UAW, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the independent United Electrical Workers, stayed out on strike. Jennings and the leaders of the other unions had failed to negotiate an improvement of grievance machinery and working conditions. A Taft-Hartley injunction was necessary to end the strike of those involved in defense production.

Carey and MacDonald were not the only leaders of large industrial unions to be felled since 1964. In that year O.A. "Jack" Knight, President of the Oil, Gas and Atomic Workers retired three years early in the face of a developing rank and file revolt. During the Miami convention of the United Rubber Workers' Union in September 1966, the widespread unrest and revolts in the local unions that had preceded the convention forced in-

cumbent President George Burdon to withdraw his candidacy for re-nomination. In an emotional speech he conceded the "serious mistakes" made during his administration. The major criticisms leveled against him were: loss of touch with the ranks, lack of personal participation in negotiations and an attempt to have the union pay his wife's personal traveling expenses. Veteran vice-president Peter Bommarito was swept into office by acclamation. He immediately pledged to take a tougher position against the employers.

Coal Miners and the Lewis Legacy

The 1963-1966 and still continuing revolt in the United Mine Workers' Union did not unseat its president, W.A. "Tony" Boyle, the hand-picked successor of John L. Lewis. However, the insurgent nominees for all top offices at the 1963 UMW convention, standing firm in spite of the violence committed against them, provided the first formal opposition to top UMW incumbents since the 1920's. Steve "Cadillac" Kochis (Boyle's challenger from Bobtown, Pennsylvania) and his supporters lost as they predicted. They knew they had decisive strength in the Ohio-Pennsylvania-West Virginia region, but they also knew the dangers of the very loose UMW balloting system. They knew that the Boyle forces would build up a commanding block of votes in far away districts that they found impossible to monitor.

Boyle inherited the revolt. Immediately after World War II, John L. Lewis turned from his policy of leading militant strikes for demands closest to the desires of his membership to an all-out program to speed the mechanization of the richest mines. The shift was hailed in the press for its technological progressiveness, but the human cost was staggering. Between 1947 and 1964 the UMW lost over 380,000 members. Lewis retained as members only those who worked in mines that could afford to automate; the rest were cut loose.

The abandoned did not all lose their jobs. More than 100,000 remained in the small mines or after a period of unemployment found work in mines that had been shut down because their veins were near exhaustion. The Lewis shift enabled them to re-open by hiring displaced miners at low pay. In West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio there are now a large number of mines that have a headroom that is often no more than 36 inches. The miners who work them literally spend their lives on their hands and knees. By 1965, the production of coal in the poorer, non-automated and non-union mines accounted for 30% of total U.S. coal production. Their owners are again making fortunes. They

employ embittered and impoverished former UMW members who have top experience and skill, at $14 a day, little more than half the union rate, and do not have to pay pension or fringe benefits. Thus, a small scale mechanization of the small mines has been made possible.

The increase in the strength of the competitive position of the non-union mines has in turn forced the large mine operators to impose a speed-up on their employees. Pressure is applied, resulting in a deterioration of protective working and safety conditions. Fatalities are as high as they were during World War II when 700.000 men were working coal underground.

During the summer of 1965 in the Ireland Mine near Moundsville, West Virginia, five local union leaders refused to work under unsafe conditions and were fired. An unauthorized strike ensued which in one week spread over the West Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania region. Roving bands of pickets easily shut down mine after mine, including United States Steel's large captive Robena mine. The UMW International leadership including the grievance processors they appoint at the local levels lost all control. The half hearted legal efforts of the U.S. Department of Labor, that had the year before attempted to increase the democratic rights of the local and regional UMW organizations, had failed. The local leaders, the only authority the rebel ranks would follow in a disciplined and responsible manner, were labeled "instigators of anarchy".

The main reason for this large unauthorized strike was the jam of unsettled grievances in mine after mine; in addition, the rank and file miners were angered that their top officials had negotiated a wage increase in the previous contract at the expense of improving working conditions. The main demands of the rebels became the right to elect their own local business agents and a democratized union structure from bottom to top. They felt that only by obtaining these rights could they find ways of helping themselves and their friends, relatives and former union brothers in the small mines. They returned to work only after being promised a greater voice in the negotiation of the next contract. In what was a major departure from past practice in the UMW, Boyle sent out a call for the Contract Policy Committee to meet *before* the opening of formal negotiations with the operators in 1966.

The contract obtained a 3% wage increase for the 100,000 soft coal miners who are left in the UMW. Their economic fringe benefits were slightly improved, but they are still far behind the workers in auto and steel. They won the right of first preference to any job openings in other mines in their district if laid off. During the negotiations they had to conduct a series of wildcat strikes to obtain these gains and their only satisfaction lay in the knowledge that the contract was an improvement over the one negotiated two years earlier. The revolt and the con-

ditions that generate it persist. "Non-union" union men work for poverty level wages under 19th century conditions. In this period between contracts, sporadic acts of all forms of sabotage are on the increase.

Bridges, Automation and B Men

In 1960 International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union President Harry Bridges negotiated the first six year "Mechanization and Modernization" contract with the Pacific Maritime Association. Like the contract that John L. Lewis negotiated for the automation of Big Coal, Bridges' contract allowed the unrestricted introduction of containerization of cargo, the use of vans, and automated cargo handling machinery. At the same time, it eliminated thousands of jobs. Primarily because of increased maritime activity due to war shipments, widespread unemployment up to now has been avoided.

Just as in coal, however, the human costs have been staggering. In the first year of the contract, the accident rate in what has become the nation's most dangerous industry went up 20%*. In the same year the longshore accident rate on the East coast declined 1/2%. To obtain this contract Bridges gave in to the employers' request that they be allowed to "buy" the elimination of the major working and safety conditions improvements won in the militant struggles of the 1930's. The long established manning scales and the 2,100 pound sling load limit were eliminated. These provisions were not only eliminated for labor performed on containerized cargo, but on the still very sizeable amount of cargo manhandled piece by piece and sack by sack.

Even more than Lewis, Bridges won the respect of employers everywhere, admiration in many liberal circles, and from the press — the title of "labor statesman." The contract established one gain for only one section of the longshoremen: during the six year life of the contract those who entered the industry before 1948, had achieved union membership prior to 1960, had reached the age of 65 and who additionally had 25 years of service, could retire with a $7,900 bonus in addition to their unimproved pension. They could retire earlier if disabled and receive a smaller bonus on a pro-rated basis. Or, if they had 25 years in the industry at age 62 they could collect the $7,900 in monthly installments until they reached 65 when the regular pension payments began.

Although the fund that pays the bonuses is created by the tonnage worked by all longshoremen, the recipients are older union members who work little more than half that tonnage. The balance is moved by B

* *Longshore Bulletin*, ILWU Local 10, February 8, 1962.

men and casuals working under the jurisdiction of the union and the younger men who became union members (A men) after 1960, none of whom are allowed to share in the fund.

The B men are a permanent and regular section of the work force who get the pick of the dirtiest and heaviest jobs that are left over after the A, or union, men have taken their pick. After the B men, casuals hired on a daily basis get their turn at the remainders. The casuals get none of the regular fringe benefits and are not compensated for that loss.

The B man system was created simultaneously with negotiations for Bridges' automation contract. The production of B men is appreciably higher than that of the union men because they lack union representation on the job. They pay dues but have no vote. In Bridges' San Francisco base and home Local (No. 10) they can attend union meetings providing they sit in a segregated section of the meeting hall's balcony. These eager-to-be-organized non-union men do most of the work that is performed deep in the holds of the ships, the area of production that produced the militants who built the ILWU in the Thirties.

Bridges fears these young men. In 1963, in collusion with the employers he led the Kafkaesque purge that expelled 82 of them from the waterfront jobs they had held for 4 years. (Over 80% of the 82 are Negroes). They were tried in secret. The charges against them were not revealed. Their number, but not their identities was made known to ILWU members. Bridges' witch hunt methods and double standards make the bureaucratic procedures used to expel his union from the CIO, and the insidious tactics used by the government to prosecute both him and James Hoffa, bland by comparison. Hoffa and Bridges at least had the right to counsel, to produce witnesses, to know the charges and to formal trial prior to judgement or sentencing.

The atmosphere of intimidation resulting from the framing of the 82 has, until now, successfully silenced open opposition among B men and younger men. However, to Bridges' surprise, a revolt against his automation contract and leadership has recently developed among the older men. Unlike B men and casuals, most of them work on the ships' decks and the docks rather than down in the hold where the major burden of the current speedup is being carried. It appeared for a time that the prospect of their receiving a bonus upon retirement and lighter daily labors would conservatize them; but 42% of all ILWU longshoremen (union or A men) on the coast voted against the second six year "Mechanization and Modernization" Agreement negotiated in July 1966. The speedup had reached these men as well. The contract won a majority in the large San Francisco local where retired members (pensioners) are allowed to vote, but lost in the other three large Pacific Coast ports of Los Angeles, Portland and Seattle. Had the B men been allowed to

vote there is little doubt that it would have been overwhelmingly defeated.

The dissension that has developed between Bridges and other top ILWU leaders since last July has become so deep that news of it has appeared in the San Francisco press. Rumors persist that the fall out is over the question of how to handle the growing revolt in the ranks. Whether Bridges continues to pursue the automation policies in which he has staked his entire reputation or abandons it to pursue a re-winning and improvement of the working conditions desired by his ranks, the effect will be to stimulate a continuance of the revolt. He is now plagued by lawsuits, including one filed by the expelled B men and another filed in Federal Court several years ago by ILWU Local 13 in the name of all members in the large port of Los Angeles. James B. Carey and David McDonald learned, and now Bridges is learning, that the pursuit of policies that alienate the ranks can also isolate a top leader from his co-officials and hasten his fall from power.

More Trouble in Maritime

The accelerated advancement of cargo handling technology during the last decade has in the last two years created an opposition to the leadership of Joseph Curran, president of the National Maritime Union. There has been a sharp decrease in the time that ships remain in American ports and the seamen are allowed ever shorter time with their families. The seamen's anger has been increased by the small monetary compensation for the special sacrifices of family and social life demanded by their industry. Curran has not responded to these problems, but instead has attempted to improve his position with the large New York membership by announcing plans for the construction of rent-free housing built with the union's pension fund. The announcement — an example of a positive and conservatizing reform initiated from above to quiet dissatisfaction — did not quell the revolt.

An aspirant to office in the NMU must already have served a term as a paid official. James M. Morrissey was one of the few oppositionists who could meet this requirement. The press has done nothing to inform the public of the fight made by Morrissey and his supporters. To this date the only source of printed information about it comes from Issue No. 23 of editor H. W. Benson's respected journal, *Union Democracy in Action*, published in New York. In an election whose honesty is not established, the incumbent officialdom conceded that Morrissey got 34% of the total vote and 14% of the New York vote in his struggle to unseat Curran.

Morrissey got close to what is the full treatment risked by rank and file opposition leaders in unions, whose democratic practices are limited.

Last September three unidentified assailants beat him with metal pipes outside his union hall. No arrests have been made. His skull was shattered in several places and the bone over one eye was crushed. He still lives as does the opposition he leads. Curran is still embattled in his fight to retain the job that pays him $83,000 annually.

By the autumn of 1966 it was possible to observe that with the exception of the United Packinghouse Workers (UPW), every major union that contributed to the creation of the CIO in the 1930's had experienced a major revolt. Conditions in the coal, auto, rubber, steel, electric and maritime industries in the Sixties are now renovating the unions whose formation they stimulated in the thirties. It should also be observed that most of the unions being renovated belong to and are a majority in the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department, headed by Walter Reuther. The reasons for the UPW's exemption from the revolt process thus far are apparent: to the credit of its president, Ralph Helstein, the first day of its 1966 convention was thrown open to the delegates to voice their gripes about conditions in both their union and industry.

The Airline Mechanics Strike

Most of the major industrial union revolts broke into the open prior to last summer. The press reported each as an individual phenomenon, if it reported them at all, and the full significance was missed. It took the five week July-August strike of the airline mechanics who are affiliated with the International Association of Machinists (IAM), to make the general American public conscious of what *Life* magazine's August 26, 1966 strike-end issue called the "New Union Militancy", and the November issue of *Fortune* documented as a period of "dramatic shift from the familiar faces to the facelessness of the rank and file". This strike of less than 30,000 men did what the much larger strike-revolts failed to do. By stopping 60% of the nation's air passenger travel they directly touched the lives of the nation's middle class.

Without advance signalling from liberal social analysts, who are usually among the first to call attention to signs of labor unrest, the daily press gave recognition to labor's new era — and no wonder. The mechanics made it impossible for reporters to ignore the observation. But the press stressed wages as the issue. Robert T. Quick, President and General Chairman of IAM District 141, gave an indication of the real issue in one of his strike press releases: "We're working under chain gang conditions for cotton picking wages".

The public had not witnessed a stance like that taken by the mechanics since the 1930's. They rejected the first contract proposed by their new

president P.L. Siemiller. They rejected a second contract worked out under the direct intervention of the Johnson administration. Siemiller stated he was sure his ranks could live with this contract, but the strike continued without pause. They went further: not only did they make plain their opposition to Johnson's intrusion in their affairs, they rejected labor's allegiance to the Democratic Party. The four largest mechanics locals on the Pacific Coast — Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle — sent telegrams to George Meany, Walter Reuther, James Hoffa and Harry Bridges asking that "immediate action be taken to form a third political party that will serve the best interests of labor".

The mechanics returned to work having broken more than the 3.7% wage guideline of the nation's chief executive. More than damaging his prestige they increased their own. It is certain that back on the job they will be treated with more respect by their immediate supervisors and that it will be easier for them to unofficially institute improvements of their "chain gang" working conditions.

Revolt Against Hoffa Rule

The revolts have not all been national or union wide in scope, but this does not diminish their potential or importance. In the latter months of 1965 James Hoffa's Teamster leadership became unable to restrain the rebellion of the Philadelphia teamsters. Local 107, City Freight Drivers, have a long tradition of opposition to their international. The leader of their local in 1963-1964 was Ray Cohen, a Hoffa supporter. The ranks were dissatisfied with the representation he supplied. Two caucuses existed in the local: "The Real Rank and File Caucus" (pro-Hoffa) and "The Voice Caucus", so called because of its publication.

The opposition to Cohen became so great that Cohen became a liability to the international. Hoffa made his first appearance in Philadelphia, after becoming International Brotherhood of Teamsters president, to announce Cohen's demotion. The elimination of Cohen evidently created no basic changes in the local. In June, 1965, at Roadway Express Incorporated's freight loading dock, a young worker, 18 years old and a son of a night over-the-road teamster's shop steward, was helping to load a big box into a trailer. He refused to work under conditions he considered unsafe. The foreman said: "If you don't to it, I'll fire you". The young freight handler answered: "Screw you. Fire away". He was fired. Four other men were ordered to do the same job, they said the same and were also fired. The five men left the job together and went to the union hall. They told their story to the ranks standing around the hall and to the local leaders. A meeting was held. The Voice caucus took the lead away from

its opponent caucus and made a motion for a general strike of all Philadelphia Teamsters, it carried and the strike was on... from five men to a strike of every driver and handler in the city and outlying region in less than 24 hours. Now to insure that the strike was totally general, the Teamsters patroled the streets, stopped trucks and made out-of-town drivers get off their trucks. As a main location for the latter activity, they chose the area in front of Sears and Roebuck's department store. There is an immense lawn and the highway widens out allowing room to parallel park trucks and trailers in large numbers. After several days of this activity, the police attacked the local drivers. The out-of-town drivers joined the strikers against the police. A pitched battle ensued. Within five minutes, the boulevard in front of Sears and Roebuck was impassable due to overturned trailers. This guerrilla-type warfare continued in many areas of the city for several days. Finally by injunction and because *both* factions of the leadership backed down, the strikers were forced back to work. Although none of their strike gains have been contractualized, they are working under better conditions besause they are able to express their strike-won strength on-the-job.

At present, both caucuses — Real Rank-and-File and the Voice — are in disrepute among the ranks because both backed down in the face of local authorities. Hoffa has threatened to take the local under trusteeship. The rank-and-file, to demonstrate that it is not defeated, had a meeting and passed a resolution which stated that such an attempt would be met by another strike.

The Painters and Dow Wilson

The 1965 Building Trades strike in Northern California's giant home building industry was particularly important because it involved skilled workers with relatively high wage scales. Plumbers, laborers, sheet metal workers and painters struck against the wishes of their international union leaders. All but the painters settled within a few days. 10,000 painters stayed out for 37 days.

San Francesco Painters' Local no. 4 is the largest local in the International Brotherhood of Painters. It was led by Dow Wilson and Morris Evenson. Its strike demands, including coffee time, were some of the most radical ever made by painters. Painting labor processes, due to the rapid advances in paint chemistry, are more rationalized than those of any other trade in the building industry. Time studies and resulting speedups are the rule. Paint foremen, rushing to make new tracts ready for the developers' sales forces, stand over painters with blank wage checkbooks protruding from their pockets. If a man falls behind he can

be summarily fired and paid off in full. Tension of all kinds is high. Unsatisfied, the employers have for some time been pressuring the union to allow them to institute the use of new methods of paint application — the elimination of brushes for rollers, pressure rollers and spray guns.

During the strike the leaders of the international union publicly sided with the employers' automation demands. Local No. 4 and its leadership stood firm. Leaders in several other northern California locals backed down and their ranks rebelled. Less than half way through the strike Dow Wilson, in effect, became the leader of the entire strike and a majority of San Francisco Bay area locals. The painters won their strike, their coffee time, a big wage increase and temporarily checked the advance of technological unemployment.

Wilson knew that the international leaders would be vindictive and that they would try to get at the ranks through him. The strike filled out his reputation as a model union leader, unique in these times. He was an independent political radical who was unhampered by dreams of wealth. He saw himself as a servant of the ranks, had exposed collusion and corruption in the painting of government housing that was cheating the taxpayers of millions of dollars, and had used his prestige to bring Negro workers into the industry. He was a threat to the international union and employers. Wilson realized he would have to carry his ranks' fight for union democracy to the international convention.

In the early morning hours of April 6, 1966, Dow Wilson was assassinated in front of the San Francisco Labor Temple — gangster style, by a shot gun blast in the face. A month later Lloyd Green, president of the nearby Hayward local and a colleague of Wilson's, was killed in an identical manner. The leaders and ranks of Local No. 4 accompanied by Wilson's widow and children demonstrated on the main streets of San Francisco and in front of the homes of city and federal authorities. Arrests were made shortly thereafter.

An official of a painting employers' association confessed a major role in authoring the assassinations and driving the murder car. His trial made it clear that his power in labor relations came from money he stole from the painters' pension fund and by threatening recalcitrants with a visit from his friend Abe "the Trigger" Chapman, whose name was formerly identified with Murder Incorporated. He also indicted a top regional union official who is a supporter of the international union's policies. The official's guilt has not been proven, legal proceedings continue.

In a matter of weeks after the burial of the assassinated leaders, the international officials of the painters union made their first unsuccessful attempt to take several Bay Area locals into trusteeship and suspend local autonomy. The courts have refused to grant an injunction against further

attempts of the International to take control, but the rank and file painters and their remaining leaders, headed by the courageous Morris Evenson, continue to show a willingness to protect their independence in every way.

Disaffiliation as a Revolt Tool

The revolt of California, Oregon and Washington pulp and paper workers in 1964 received little publicity. However, it caught the attention of labor leaders nationally. In compliance with National Labor Relations Board requirements, workers in locals that were affiliated with two aging and eastern based AFL-CIO internationals (International Brotherhood of Pulp Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers and the United Papermakers and Paperworkers) broke away to form the independent Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers (AWPPW). The old unions lost face and $500,000 a year in dues monies.

The AWPPW members whose work in 49 mills accounts for 90% of pulp and paper production on the Pacific Coast, set up headquarters in Portland, Oregon. They announced the birth of their union through the publication of a monthly newspaper, *The Rebel*. They elected a president who is typical of the new union's staff; before taking office he was a mill electrician.

Since its initial organization the AWPPW has had strong support from regional and local unions in areas where they set up locals, but life has been hard for this new union. Its newness and small membership has made it impossible to build the large treasury needed to operate a union today. It is not just the high cost of routine operation, collective bargaining against large corporations and legal costs that have created problems. The AWPPW is continually harassed by the two bureaucratized unions from which it split, both of which have the support of George Meany and the conservative AFL-CIO hierarchy. As their isolation increases and the official support they receive from other unions shrinks, owing to pressure from Meany, their energies are expended in a fight for existence rather than growth.

Throughout the United States there are large numbers of workers in local and regional units whose position is similar to that of the Pacific Coast pulp and paper workers, prior to their establishment of independence in 1964. Their working conditions and wages are artificially depressed because of what amounts to captive affiliations with conservatively led international unions. Their tolerance of their captivity seems unlimited only because at present there is no progressive alternative available.

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Stanley Weir

*U.S.A.: The Labor Revolt**

Almost without exception the revolts were conducted primarily to improve the conditions of life on-the-job. This is absolutely contrary to what the public has been led to believe. Newspaper, television and radio reporting rarely relates the existence, let alone the details, of labor's non-economic demands. The following statement by the Director of Research in Technology and Industrial Relations at Yale University stands as a classic definition of strike causes in American industry:

> In 1936 and 1937, a wave of sit-down strikes swept through the rubber and automobile plants of the United States. The workers on strike wanted higher wages, union recognition, and an organized machinery for the handling of day-to-day grievances, but, above all, they were striking against what they called the 'speed-up' of work as governed by the assembly line. The causes of every major strike are complex and frequently so interwoven as to be inseparable. But somewhere among the causes (and frequently basic to the others, as in the sit-downs) are work-methods and working-conditions.
>
> Two years before the first sit-down strike the country experienced a nation-wide walk-out of textile workers. Here, discrimination against union members, wages, and many other issues were involved, but the dynamic origin of the disturbance (not only in 1934, but through the remaining thirties and after) was the introduction of new work methods and machinery, all of which were generally lumped by the workers and denounced as the 'stretch-out'. If particular work-methods or undesirable working-conditions may sometimes cause a national walk-out, they are also the common origin of innumerable lesser conflicts in the world of industry. The net result of a minor conflict over a work-method may be a day's slow-down or a grievance fought through the local's plant grievance machinery or, perhaps, hostilities expressed in low-quality work or by a high rate of absenteeism ... When neglected or misunderstood these merely local disturbances can, with surprising rapidity, grow into a national emergency.[1]

Walker does not deny the importance of issues other than those involving working conditions, he simply says that they are secondary. Work methods and conditions are not the only issues in the current revolts. Wage increases have not kept up with price increases since the end of World War II. Americans have become accustomed to the pattern and have adjusted to it. Workers have maintained or increased their purchasing power by working long overtime hours, "moonlighting" (working two jobs) or putting their wives to work. This is not to say that the unusually big jump in the cost of living that occurred last year failed to increase anger, frustration and discontent. It did, but the American working class has not yet found an effective way to oppose price increases. Workers in the larger and stronger unions in particular have come to believe that wage increases are a defensive or holding action. Even when they have won substantial raises, price increases have wiped them out in a matter of months. They no longer believe that a collective bargaining contract whose major achievement is a wage increase represents a victory of more than temporary progress.

The above belief nothwithstanding, it is always difficult and often impossible for workers to make the improvement of working conditions the formal as well as primary goal of contract negotiation[2]. It is absolutely impossible for the employed near-poor and poor. For example, the conditions of work of the farm laborers in California's Central Valley are brutal and improvements are sorely needed, yet the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee headed by Caesar Chavez continues to give the wage demands top priority. His ranks would have it no other way.

* The first part of this article appeared in the ISJ no. 20.

[1] Charles R. Walker, "Work Methods, Working Conditions, and Morale", *Industrial Conflict* A. Kornhauser, R. Dubin and A. Ross, eds., McGraw-Hill, New York 1954.

[2] A informative discussion of this point is contained in Alvin W. Gouldner, *Wildcat Strike*, Antioch Press, 1954.

In a sense, the farm worker puts aside his own most immediate need because he has responsibilities to his wife and children. Then too, it should not be forgotten that workers who have incomes twice as large as the farm workers find it difficult to keep their wives in good spirit or their creditors patient during a strike whose major goal in anything other than a sizeable wage increase.

Employers take the attitude that their authority over work methods and conditions is unchallengeable and sacrosanct. Most of all they fear any kind of employee control over the production process. No matter that the union sometimes forces them to grant sizeable wage boosts, they cover their increased costs and more by getting more work out of their employees. American employers have made it clear that they will make a principled stand against any demand that would give a union any authority over the methods, conditions and speed of production. Union officials fear fighting so determined an enemy, and they fear the new union leaders that would be developed in such a fight. The fight for better conditions cannot be made every one, two or three years like the wage fights; it must be fought every day inside the plants. During such a fight the base and authority of the union would be moved from the union hall back inside the plant. Workers who are willing to fight their employer to obtain a better life on-the-job have to be prepared to fight their union leaders as well.

There are two principal reasons why the American workers are now so persistently demanding an improvement of their working conditions:

1) *Post World War II automation has introduced new machinery into American industry in large quantities. With the introduction of each new machine or process, workers are forced to give up established patterns and habits of work and form new ones. During the transition period the employers use their authority to introduce new work rules that will further increase the pace of work. For the most part, the revolts involve the workers' counter-attempts to introduce rules that will slow or maintain the old pace of work.* Employers have retained the contractual right to establish the speed at which assembly lines will travel and the methods by which work shall be performed. No major international union, including the UAW, has made a concerted and national effort to restrict that right. Workers in most modern automobile assembly plants turn out between 60 and 70 cars an hour. Neither the human anatomy nor mentality was designed to endure such strain or monotony [3].

[3] A manifestation of which may be the reported increase in the use of drugs within the plants:

"Pep pill use by factory workers draws increasing concern as a hidden hazard. Plant medical directors and safety specialists fear scattered signs of drug use by production workers are symptomatic of an underground factory safety problem. A major farm equipment maker, a big food processor, detect increased use of pep pills in their plants.

The long post World War II prosperity, based on a consumer market that had been neglected for four years and continued production for war, has materially improved the lives of the bulk of organized industrial workers. This stands in sharp contrast to the deterioration or lack of improvement in the quality of their daily work life [4].

The working conditions of many American workers, like the longshoremen of both the ILWU and the ILA, have deteriorated. Their union leaders have traded away the improvements of work and safety rules won during the militant struggles of the 1930's for wage increases and economic fringe benefits — gains that have failed to keep apace with the ever increasing cost of living. Moreover, there are millions more who, unlike the longshoremen, had no protective work rules that could be sold or traded away. They have spent years of their lives in an environment that shows no promise of getting better.

2) *The introduction of new machinery and the increased use of speedup methods in American industry now threatens the physical safety and health of American workers in the most direct and literal sense.* According to the National Safety Council's 1966 report on U.S. industry, "14,500 workers died and another 2.2 million were temporarily or permanently disabled in 1966, due to on-the-job accidents". The U.S. Public Health Service recognizes the crisis is greater than at any time in the nation's history and is spending a record $6.6 million on occupational health this year. Industry, government and the press are now showing their concern. Syndicated columnist Sylvia Porter recently discussed a "top level" report to the U.S. Surgeon General that argued that $50 million a year is needed to reduce hazards by 20%; she further argued that doing so "would add $11 billion a year to our production" [5].

The problems of speedup and increased safety hazards have been ignored by the official union leaders. Workers have been forced to seek solutions outside official union grievance machinery. Production, particularly in heavy industry, is plagued by constant slowdowns and sabotage. Bolts are dropped into the slots in which the chains travel that pull the

One workers's tool box turns up a hundred bennies [benzedine capsules]. One executive suspects 'there are several pushers in our plants'. 'The problem is most acute in California', he adds, 'but we've found a little of this to be countrywide'.

"Los Angeles narcotics authorities turn up a well-supplied pusher in an auto plant; they aid big aerospace companies seeking remedies to the problem. One California narcotics specialist figures pills are pushed in all plants with assembly-line operations. Some executives blame today's fast production pace and excessive moonlighting for driving workers to stimulants. One detective says that employers don't want to attack the problem for fear of stirring unfavorable publicity". *Wall Street Journal*, November 22, 1966.

[4] Most unionized American workers have a high standard of *consumption*, relative to their European counterparts or their American counterparts of the 1930's, but they have a low standard of *living*. This point is developed by Charles R. Walker and Robert H. Guest, *Man and the Assembly Line*, Cambridge 1952.

[5] *San Francisco Chronicle, April* 13, 1967.

assembly lines; machinery is not maintained or is handled in a way that will hasten its breakdown. The quality of the product or service is harmed by shortcuts that allow a momentary breathing spell; creativity and efficiency are withheld. The object is revenge, release from boredom, and the rest that results while repairs are awaited. The entire process is a form of guerrilla warfare. It is conducted by the informal work group made up of empoyees that are put in contact with one another by the productive process. The actions of the groups are not always coordinated. A particular group seldom has contact with more than one or two others. Each group has its own leaders. No formal elections are held.

For brief periods after each victory (and under management's increased surveillance) the glee is limitless though no trace of it can be found on the facial expressions of the participants. Nevertheless it is a difficult war. Victories are short-lived. The tension saps energies and the speedup continues. In many plants employees hired as spies openly take notes. While there are few mortalities (firings), there are many casualties. Suspected trouble-markers are sometimes temporarily laid-off for real or alleged infractions of rules unrelated to the actual charge. Most often they are transferred to other departments of the shop. They sustain no loss in pay, but must accustom themselves to new foremen, new repetitive tasks and undergo a period of initiation in their new work groups. Until this is done they cannot transfer membership and again receive the full benefits of the group's informal and unofficial union, i.e., its camaraderie and the right to be included in its social and underground activities.

The leaders of the underground unions apply pressure to the members of the official bargaining committee within the shop. The bargaining committee transfers the pressure to the leaders of the local union who in turn transmit it to the regional representatives of the international union. The latter communicate news of the crisis to their employers. Official leaders from the bargaining committees to the top hierarchy are afforded the choice of representing the demands of the leaders in the strata just below them or being removed from office or losing the ability to be effective in their job. The pressures from the local union leader have forced the development of splits among officials at the international union level, due to differences of opinion on how best to handle or contain the unrest in the ranks. This is the dominant pattern that emerged during the revolts of the last three years and a manifestation of the "hard-soft" division that inevitably occurs in the leadership of all establishments when they become embattled from below. The "hard" seek to ignore or police the rebellion and the "softs" maintain that it can only be checked by reforms initiated at the top.

In the United Steel Workers, International Union of Electrical

Workers, United Rubber Workers, Transport Workers Union and the Oil, Gas and Atomic Workers Union, when the number of local rebellions grew to substantial proportions or when revolt for any reason threatened the security of the top bureaucracy, the more flexible or 'soft' leaders became convinced that concessions had to be made to the rebel demands. Only within the Transport Workers Union was the entire leadership, including the international president (Mike Quill), won to this position. In the other internationals the more responsive of the top leaders failed to win over their "hard" colleagues. Stimulated by the opportunity to reassert integrity, or motivated by the need to survive, they made alliances with the rebel leaders at the local levels. They initiated power struggles that utilized the revolt from below. At least temporarily the most militant sections of the ranks became their troops. The more conservative locals whose members had not yet developed their own revolt to the point of open outbreak or who remained complacent, became the forces of the incumbent international presidents and their lieutenants who continued to resist change.

It was only at this point that these revolts became union-wide and nationally organized, but only from the top down. In most cases the power struggles reached their climax during the regularly scheduled elections of international officers. Old bureaucrats like David McDonald, James Carey, George Burdon and O.A. Knight were replaced by secondary international leaders. The above examples alone document that there have been more changes in the leadership of the American labor unions since 1964 than in the previous fifteen years. All of them took place in a span of less than two years. All were forced by rank and file unrest. None of them were "palace coups". The deposed international presidents were the victims of revolts from below that did not and do not yet have their own union-wide organizational machinery.

In the unions in which the revolts did not create a division in the to leadership, leaders at the local level in some instances threatened to disaffiliate and take their local organizations into another union. An example is provided by the skilled workers of the UAW who have used the existence of the conservative and independent International Society of Skilled Trades, the competitor of the UAW's Skilled Trades Division, to win concessions from Reuther. The 1965 birth of the earlier mentioned Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers (AWPPW), in an example of the threat made good.

Reuther Attempts to Contain Revolt

Most of the major revolts have taken place in international unions that were CIO unions prior to the 1955 merger of the AFL and CIO. They

now comprise the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Department (IUD) headed by Walter Reuther. George Meany's unwillingness to retire and allow Reuther to fill the top office plus his inability to provide programs and leadership that can head off and contain the revolts, threatens the position of all AFL-CIO Executive Council members. It particularly jeopardizes Reuther's ability to maintain his authority over the IUD.

Late last year the Reuther-Meany conflict over foreign policy allowed the public its first knowledge of a serious rift in the top leadership of the AFL-CIO. Reuther openly objected when AFL-CIO delegates to a European labor conference walked out because delegates from Communist-bloc countries were seated. Meany sanctioned the action. The December 28, 1966, UAW Administrative Letter explained, however, that contrary to the impression created by the press, the UAW's disagreements with Meany's policies did not "derive soley and exclusively from differences over international affairs". After calling to the UAW's record of "continuous and successful struggle against communism and all other forms of totalitarianism", the letter stated that Meany's leadership

> suffers from a sense of complacency and adherence to the status quo and is not fulfilling the basic aims and purposes which prompted the merger of the AFL-CIO.

The letter's characterization of Meany's leadership is succinct and accurate. It was true five years ago, ten years ago and every day of the almost twelve year old merger, and the truth until recently was tolerated in silence. The biggest part of the cost for the silence maintained by Reuther and the other members of the AFL-CIO Executive Council has been borne by the ranks of labor. The characterization is read with satisfaction, but satisfies few as an explanation for Reuther's 1967 rift with Meany.

There are labor journalists who have speculated that it was Reuther's concern over his place in labor history that made it impossible for him to wait any longer for Meany to retire and vacate the top office. Others have suggested that his threat to split away from the AFL-CIO is a maneuver designed to increase his bargaining power within that body. A number of interpretations are possible and others will be forthcoming from labor analysts of the "inside dopester" set. There may be some truth in all of them but it is improbable that any of them provides an adequate explanation. Journalists of the daily press and liberal magazines seldom conduct their research below the top leadership levels.

Reuther not only needs a program to help him win support in the unions of the IUD, he also needs a rationale for his failure to supply the leadership desired by the ranks of the UAW. His threatened split with Meany puts him in a position to tell his membership that he is now free

to make the fight against the auto employers that they have long wanted, a fight that was impossible in the past because of a lack of support from the conservative Meany leadership. Reuther's indictment of Meany is, however, more than a diversionary tactic. He is keenly aware of a new radical mood and on-the-job militancy as evidenced by revolts in the UAW, in other unions and among other workers only now beginning to organize; a militancy that in the 1930's allowed John L. Lewis to break away from the AFL and form a new labor federation, and become the outstanding labor leader of his time.

Lewis centralized and structured the power of the revolts that had taken place factory-by-factory and industry-by-industry. Nationwide bargaining raised and stabilized the incomes of millions of semi-skilled workers. In the process, Lewis disciplined and conservatized their revolt. Wildcat strikes and slowdowns were necessarily replaced by collective bargaining and formal grievance procedures, and employers were assured production wouldn't be interrupted so often. This was done at the expense of rank and file organizational power on the job. To dampen the militancy of rank and file leaders, top officials rewarded (i.e. offered staff jobs to) only those willing to adopt "responsible" attitudes.

Lewis had the organisational and ideological wherewithal to build a new federation, even while disciplining the ranks. Reuther lacks the comparable, necessary programmatic equipment to centralize, structure and discipline the revolts of the 1960's. The industrial and most powerful section of American workers already has unions and industry-wide contracts. For the first time, they are in a position to make a direct struggle to improve the conditions of their lives on the job and Reuther has no program for this struggle.

Inflation has heightened the demand for wage increases, but the revolts broke out long before rapid price increases and labor shortages were created by the war in Vietnam, during 1965 anel 1966. For over three years labor leaders have had no assurance that the contracts they negotiate will not be greeted by unauthorized strikes or that they will be able to end strikes already in process. The February 9, 1967 issue of the *Wall Street Journal* reports that union ranks in 1966 rejected 11.7% of all settlements participated in by the government's Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. The rate has never been higher. Labor's officialdom continues to negotiate for purely economic benefits and the ranks vote with their feet until they get some satisfaction on working condition grievances. News articles typically report that, "agreement has been reached on the economic package but the parties are still far apart on other issues", or "a wage settlement has been reached but the strike continues over purely local issues in the following key plants", etc., etc.

On February 8, Walter Reuther issued his new "Program for the